



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone
928 638-7609 fax
www.nps.gov/grca

Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Shannan Marcak
Phone number: 928-638-7958
Date: October 21, 2009

Update on South Rim Fall Prescribed Fire Plans

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – Grand Canyon National Park fire officials continue to make plans for a prescribed burn on the South Rim.

Fire managers had originally planned to initiate the Hance-Watson1 Fire in late September/early October. However, dropping humidity and rising winds caused them to postpone the burn. Fire managers now plan to initiate the Hance-Watson1-Hearst Tank Fire within the next 30 days, with ignition activities beginning as early as Saturday, October 24.

The Hance-Watson1-Hearst Tank Prescribed Fire project will include three adjoining burn units, consisting of ponderosa pine and pinyon/juniper stands as well as grass and brush. These burn units are located south of Highway 64 near Grandview Point, about nine miles southeast of Grand Canyon Village.

Portions of these burn units and the surrounding areas burned earlier this year during the Ruby Fire on the Kaibab National Forest (to the west and south) and the Game Reserve Fire within Grand Canyon National Park (to the north and east.) The Watson 1 burn unit includes 235 unburned acres within the 365 acre unit. The Hance burn unit includes 272 unburned acres within the 342 acre unit. The Watson 1 and Hance burn units last burned in 2007. The Hearst Tank burn unit includes 491 unburned acres within the 933 acre unit. This will be the first prescribed burn within the Hearst Tank burn unit.

Approximately 1000 acres will be treated during the burn. A combination of hand and aerial ignition will be used. Ignition is expected to take approximately three days with blacklining (the creation of a boundary of burned vegetation) occurring first. All ignition activities will occur only as weather and fuel conditions permit. As a result, these activities may occur periodically during the next month rather than on consecutive days.

Smoke is projected to disperse to the northeast and will likely settle into the canyon at night, beginning to lift out with daytime heating by late morning. Visitors may also see some smoke

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

and smoldering fire activity for several days after ignition is completed. Grand Canyon National Park fire managers are coordinating with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and will continue to evaluate weather and fuel conditions.

Fire ignition will only occur when environmental factors such as wind, temperature, and relative humidity are favorable to achieving fire management objectives. If conditions do not meet predetermined standards, the burn will once again be postponed until conditions are favorable.

Prescribed fires play an important role in decreasing risks to life, property and resources by reducing accumulations of forest fuels and maintaining the natural role of fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem.

Minor traffic delays are possible in the vicinity of the fire. When necessary, public safety personnel will direct traffic in these areas.

To learn more about the Hance-Watson-Hearst Tank Prescribed Fire, please call South Rim Fire Management Officer Art Gonzales at 928-638-7947. To learn more about Grand Canyon National Park's fire management program, visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm.

-NPS-